

## Our Lady of Beauraing (1932–1933)

### A Glowing Figure Appears to Children

On a misty fall evening in 1932, four children were walking together to their local convent school in the small town of Beauraing, Belgium to pick up a fifth child when the group noticed a glowing white figure of a woman hovering in the air nearby. Startled, they exclaimed to each other that it looked like the Blessed Virgin Mary. The children - Fernande Voisin (15), Albert Voisin (11), Andrée Degeimbre (14), and Gilberte Degeimbre (9) -- saw the figure glide through the air above a grotto commemorating Our Lady of Lourdes, beside a hawthorn tree.

She wore a white dress and veil, her feet blended into a cloud beneath them, and brilliant rays of light shone around her head like a halo. The children rushed past the figure to pick up Gilberte Voisin (13), and when they pointed out the apparition to her, she could see it, too. However, the nun who answered the convent door that night couldn't see the apparition and told the kids they must be mistaken. After telling the nun that they felt afraid because something (whatever it was) was definitely there, they ran all the way back to their homes. Their parents didn't believe their stories about the apparition, either. This was to be the first of 33 appearances Mary would make in Beauraing between November 1932 and January 1933.

### Mary Communicates through the Children

In each case, Mary communicated with children rather than with adults. Many of the adults in Beauraing had faith, yet responded to the apparitions with doubt and fear. Even though the children were initially startled, they showed enthusiasm for learning from the apparition experience. The children's positive, openhearted attitudes may have been why Mary chose to send her messages through the children. The crowd of people who witnessed the children's experiences with Mary grew larger each time Mary visited. By the time of the final apparition, more than 30,000 people gathered to see and hear the children communicate with Mary.

Most of the apparitions took place in the convent's garden near the grotto and tree. Mary seemed to ground her spiritual energy on the tree's branches or on the grotto's rocks when she



appeared -- usually making the transition from one dimension to another with a bright flash of light and an explosive sound.

When Mary appeared, the children would fall to their knees in unison, and although they fell suddenly and sharply, somehow they were never injured in the process. The children, who often prepared for Mary's visits by praying, also sounded different after the moment each apparition began. Their voices became significantly louder and higher-pitched, as if they were in tune with a specific communication frequency with Mary. During the apparitions, they seemed to be in ecstatic trances, as other visionaries of Marian apparitions have been (such as the children of Garbandal, Spain in the 1960s). Various doctors examined the children repeatedly during their trances, trying to see if they could distract them by various means (including pricking them with sharp objects and placing burning matches on their skin), yet the children were unharmed and unaware of anything except the apparitions.

## Mary's Messages

The messages that Mary spoke to the children during the apparitions were brief and simple, yet highlighted profound spiritual issues. Mary told the children that she wanted a chapel to be built on the site so that people could visit it on spiritual pilgrimages.

"Always be good," Mary said, in French, to Albert after he asked her what she wanted the children to do. That simple, childlike way of asking the children to try to do and say what's right in every situation was advice they could manage well.

Mary also urged the children to stay in touch regularly with God through prayer. "Pray! Pray a lot," some of the children said Mary told them. The importance of praying frequently is a key message that Mary presents in all of her miraculous apparitions, including the longest ones (such as the Medjugorje apparitions, which have been going on since the 1980s).

"I am the Mother of God, the Queen of Heaven," Mary told Andrée. "Pray always." By highlighting these two of the many honorary titles believers have given her and relating them to prayer, Mary implied that she pays close attention to people's prayers and faithfully helps answer them in powerful ways.

Gilberte Voisin reported that Mary told her: "I shall convert sinners." That message speaks of Mary's desire to attract all people to open themselves up to God's great love for them. God loves people unconditionally, just as they are, yet also leads and empowers them to grow so they can fulfill their highest potential.

During Mary's last apparition in Beauraing, Fernande didn't see her when the other four children did. So Fernande stayed in the garden afterward, hoping and praying to see Mary, who then showed up for Fernande. Mary tested Fernande's faith by asking "Do you love my



son [Jesus Christ]?" Then after Fernande replied "yes" Mary asked "Do you love me?". Fernande said "yes" again. Mary's next words were: "Then sacrifice yourself for me." Mary wanted to be sure that Fernande would be willing to do whatever God calls her to do, even when it means that she has to sacrifice her own plans to do so. True love calls people to obedient action, as the Bible says in 2 John 1:6: "And this is love: that we walk in obedience to his [God's] commands. As you have heard from the beginning, his command is that you walk in love."

## **A Golden Heart Appears on the Apparition**

The later apparitions featured an image of a golden heart in Mary's chest. Mary opened her arms to reveal the heart to the children. Bright rays of golden light emanated from all sides of the heart.

As a symbol of Mary's powerful motherly love, the heart emphasized that all people have a place in Mary's heart. Mary has often communicated through apparitions that the most valuable gift of all -- love -- is freely available to all who seek closer relationships with God through Mary and her son, Jesus. God is loving and merciful, Mary's messages say, and he has reached out to humanity through Jesus to make it possible for everyone to have eternal relationships with him.

## **Healing Miracles Happen**

Many miraculous events of healing body, mind, and spirit happened at Beauraing, believers have reported. Most have taken place in the years since the apparitions concluded, but some even happened while the apparitions were still in progress.

A 12-year-old girl named Paulette Dereppe who had been suffering from a disabling bone infection for three years was cured dramatically in one night after two months of the visionary children asking Mary during the apparitions to heal her. The infection had caused large open sores all over Paulette's body. During her overnight healing, every wound was replaced by scar tissue, and Paulette made a full recovery.

One of the most dramatic miracles that occurred after the apparitions involved a 33-year-old woman named Marie Van Laer, who was nearly at the point of death from a disease that had afflicted her with tumors all over her body. Marie visited Beauraing in June 1933 and arranged for the visionary children to meet her there. Lying on a stretcher by the hawthorn tree, Marie (with the children) prayed for help from Mary. She suddenly felt a tremendous jolt of joy. Then her physical pain disappeared. Shortly after she returned home, the tumors were gone, and after examining her, her doctors declared that she had been cured somehow.